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Notes of the Month.

We would call our readers' earnest attention to the article on another page concerning the League of Nations. The latter has received the warm commendation of the King and representative men of all parties, and it is for us to prove ourselves no laggards in the prosecution of the cause of peace. The General Purposes Committee of our Non-Subscribing Church, recognising the supreme imporance of this matter, appointed a Sub-Committee to make needful arrangements for joining in the general response to the King's appeal. In the article elsewhere suggestions are made as to the manner in which our ministers and people may effectually act. We confidently believe that November 9th will be a day of general celebration in our various congregations. If in Belfast and other large centres public meetings are held we should endeavour to be represented not only as members of Churches, but as citizens concerned for the most pressing and important of all great crusades.

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At the recent meetings of the Church Congress it was clearly evident that the Anglican Communion is becoming more and more alive to the claims of great social and industrial movements. There was a time within our own recollection when discussions chiefly turned upon matters of ritual or Church order, and much time was bestowed upon the question of the use or otherwise of the Athanasian Creed, or the need or otherwise of a reformed Book of Common Prayer. It is rightly felt that when Rome is burning it is no time to call for variations on the violin, and that unless a vital interest be shown in burning questions the great masses of the people will be further alienated from organised religion. Men like the late Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Gore, are now ready to gain a sympathetic hearing in their advocacy of the social implications of the Christian religion. It is likely, as we understand, that Dr. Gore will visit Belfast in the immediate future. If so, he should be welcomed by members of all Churches, not only for his own sake, but also for the sake of his wide and practical social sympathies.

The tragic death of Mr. R. T. Martin, the Chairman of the Governors of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, will cause widespread regret in the North of Ireland. Not alone in the above capacity, but on many public bodies he had advocated the cause of education. Just a short time ago he was elected member of the Intermediate Board, his invitation coming from the Lord Lieutenant, and being a striking recognition of his educational status. A week ago he received a striking testimonial from his fellow-Governors, amongst them several of our Non-Subscribing Church, and the wish was then expressed that he might continue for many years as Chairman of the Board of Governors. But now a valuable life has been tragically ended, and we can only voice our heartfelt regret and tender to his relatives our profound sympathy.

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A short time ago we received from the Presidents of four of our principal bodies in England an appeal on behalf of the ministry of our Free Churches. As in every religious community at the present time, there is a falling-off in the number of young men taking up the Christian ministry. So serious is this in some cases that pulpits cannot be supplied. Whatever the fundamental cause of this decline may be, it is certain that a contributory cause is the growing appreciation of the inadequacy of ministerial stipends. It is not right that this should be stressed to the detriment of more important aspects. Those who embraced the ministry for its financial emoluments had far better look elsewhere for a livelihood. In any case they are hardly the men to do the best ministerial work, which should manifest unselfishness and the spirit of self-sacrifice. Yet the labourer is surely worthy of his hire, and so long as there is a widespread conviction that he is not receiving it, so long will it tell against candidates for the ministry. Our own Non-Subscribing Church desires to attract young men of our congregations to its pulpits. At present, owing to the fact that two students have gone to our English Theological colleges, there are only two students contemplating the ministry, and of those one is not yet demobilised. Others should therefore be coming forward if the supply is to be maintained. We trust that there is still the conviction that the ministry presents a splendid and much-needed sphere of labour. Our ministers can help in the encouragement and guidance of young men prepared to find in the ministry a real vocation, and we hope that they may keep in view the apostolic succession of their own Church.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE CHURCHES.

Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D

With the approach of the first anniversary of Armistice Day on November 11th, it is fitting that the minds of thoughtful people should be concerned with the idea of perpetual peace. If not yet realised in fact, the hope of it waxes ever stronger, as also does the determination to labour for its realisation. This was clearly manifest in the great meeting held in the Mansion House, London, last month. The timely message of the King, read at that meeting, put the matter with much felicity :—

"We have won the war. That is a great achievement, but it is not enough. We fought to gain a lasting peace, and it is our supreme duty to take every measure to secure it. For that, nothing is more essential than a strong and enduring League of Nations. Every day that passes make this more clear. The Covenant of Paris is a good foundation, well and truly laid ; but it is and can be no more than a foundation. The nature and strength of the structure to be built upon it must depend on the earnestness and sincerity of popular support.

"Millions of British men and women, poignantly conscious of all the ruin and suffering caused by the brutal havoc of war, stand ready to help if only they be shown the way.

"Knowledge of what has already been done, appreciation of the difficulties that lie before us, and determination to overcome them—these we must spare no efforts to secure.

"I commend the cause to all the citizens of my Empire, so that, with the help of all other men of good will, a buttress and a sure defence of Peace, to the glory of God and the lasting fame of our age and country may be established."

GEORGE, R.I.

Thus commended to all good citizens, the cause of the League of Nations should find particular support among the members of the Christian Churches. Here is an object concerning which there can be no cavil or possibility of dissension. If ever unity be practicable it is surely when professing followers of the Prince of Peace are invited to further the interests of peace. We therefore believe that the response will be wide and whole-hearted, and everything that can be done will be done to further this great cause. Here we are concerned with what the Churches may do, believing that adequate arrangements are being made by civic and other secular authorities to ventilate the subject. As far as possible, November 9th, the Sunday before Armistice Day, should be set apart for the purpose of stating and advocating the objects of the League of Nations Union. No preacher could have a more congenial or important theme than that. We trust that in our own Non-Subscribing Church our ministers will as far as possible make at least one service on November 9th subserve the project of the League of Nations. Further, a special endeavour should be made to bring the matter home to the minds of the scholars in our Sunday Schools. To them largely the interests of the future will be committed, and among such the prominent issue is that of peace amongst the nations. Never again, we trust, will the young and abole-bodied have to pay the heavy price of world-wide war. It is for them to realise what war has meant and to resolve that it shall never recur.

Yet something more is necessary than the fitting and emphatic commendation of the League of Nations. The spoken word should be followed by something more binding and permanent. Wherever possible, a local branch of the League of Nations Union could be formed, pledging the members to use all their influence in support of the Union and its great objects. The financial responsibilities of membership woul not be great, while the benefit of associated aim and endeavour would be immeasurable. In cases where a a local Church could not hope to have its own branch of the Union, it might unite with neighbouring Churches for the common object, and thus secure wider strength and fellowship. In such a case it is highly probable that the Union would provide from headquarters a suitable lecturer to introduce the matter. There are simply immense possibilities if only opportune steps be taken to give the project really widespread and strenuous support. Incalculable good can only result from the linking up of many agencies and organisations for the furtherance of a common object. The war touched us all and wounded us all—peace alone can heal our wounds and guard us from greater injury. Let the fair cause of Peace win its widening way, commanding our respect and our devoted championship, the resultant good will not alone be ours, but will mean the priceless boon of mankind and the precious heritage of those who shall succeed us. Hence we confidently believe that whatever other Churches may do or leave undone, a high sense of duty will impel us to advocate now and henceforth the proposals of the the League of Nations.

A HARVEST SERMON.

By Rev. W. H. T. TILSON, M.A.

Preaching at morning service in Banbridge from the words, "Forty years dids't Thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old" (Ne-

hemiah, ix, 21), the rev. preacher said that in reading of the wanderings of the Hebrew people there was one thing that struck them very forcefully—that the great prophets and great liberators of the Hebrew people believed strongly and implicitly in the all-provident and all-sustaining power of God. As the prophet of old looked into the starry heavens and saw the great canopy placed about him he whispered in all-inspiring terms the word "God." He looked across the fields and saw something like what they had all seen lately, the fields waving with golden corn, and whispered the word "God." He recollected how by a strong hand they had been brought from the land of Egypt and wandered across the Red Sea and braved the dangers of the wilderness, and again he whispered the word "God." Had they not, continued the preacher, a lesson to learn from that. As they sat in that beautiful old church decorated by willing, loving and loyal hands, and as the Hebrew people of old they had placed their offering in front of them so that they might remind them of what they owed to God, and they thought, perhaps, of all that science had done and the great advancement that had been made in agriculture and and all that had been freed from the great spiritual forces of nature, they were inclined to say that all this had been due to their own hands and brains. They should, however, as they looked at the offerings of fruit and flowers, whisper, "Behind it all is God." Like the Children of Israel they had passed through a terrible wilderness. Things were very much wrong with the country and it looked at times as if the hand of famine would clutch at their throats and destroy them; and, whilst the manna did not literally come down from heaven and the water gush forth from the rock, yet their harvests were plentiful, and behind it all was God. As they met together on another anniversary of harvest let them lift up their hearts and thank Him who was the provider and sustainer of their needs. If the second part of the text was taken literally it would mean that the clothes which the old people wore on leaving the land of Egypt never wore out, and the clothes worn by the children grew with them and fitted their advancing years. It was easy to find fault with the Bible—easy to try and prove that there were inconsistencies in it and to show it was not the book they claimed it to be. That was all due to their ignorance in wanting to make temporary and permanent the things that were shifting and changing, and refused to see the deep spiritual truth that lay underneath. What was the truth that lay behind the statement—"Their clothes waxed not old." Was it not that as the days came along and as they passed from childhood and youth to manhood, as the people who left the land of Egypt, their outlook on religion, if they might call it that, suited their advancing years. The mere exchange of words became to them a reality and suited them as they advanced. Did they not come to realise that religion was the clothing of the soul and as man advanced the clothing must fit. They were trying to take those words, that were used in the peculiar oriental sense and suited to a different age and time when science and knowledge were entirely different to what they were now, and make them fit the needs they were confronted with to-day. The result of that was that people got up in their pride and arrogance and said that religion was a failure, and it was bound to be a failure if stress were laid on the temporal and not on the eternal. They found people who told them that the world was bad and that there was no hope for it; but on the other hand there were a great number who realised that the world was not bad; that it was in God's hands and that the circumstances by which they were surrounded were those best suited for them. There were people, he said, who got up and sang "How pleasant are the paths of death." How hypocritical it was? The paths of death were not pleasant at all, and the men who were trying to make the best of the world listen to those people and the result of it was that they did

not believe in religion, they did not believe in God or in anything. There were other men who were up against the realities of life and saw religion sheared and cleared and the real eternal and permanent—those were the soldiers at the front. Passing on, the rev. preacher said that with all their boasted knowledge and Christianity they were a long way behind Jesus yet, who came to teach God's great love. Their harvest festival taught them that God not only cared for the soul, but also for the body, and he wanted them to learn that lesson and that they might clothe their own souls and those of others with the changeless and the eternal. What was the changeless and the eternal?—love to God and love to their fellowmen; on those two hung the law and the prophets.

The service concluded with the singing of the Lord's Prayer.

A crowded congregation was present at the Evening Service, and another interesting and instructive sermon was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Tilson.

FAMILY HISTORY OF THE LATE MR. JOHN FRANCIS MULLIGAN,

SOLICITOR, BELFAST.

BY DR. JOHN CAMPBELL.

The recent death of Mr. John Francis Mulligan, solicitor, Belfast, has deprived the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of one of its most devoted members, and has taken away one who could claim kindred with some of those who took part in the long struggle which formerly agitated the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as to whether the teaching of Jesus Christ or the opinions of John Calvin should be the accepted standard of the Church. The following is taken from an account of Mr. Mulligan's family, supplied by himself in 1912:—PATERNAL.—Daniel Mulligan (who was of Irish descent) lived in Scotland, and was twice married. The maiden name of his second wife was Isabel Glen. Upwards of 200 years ago Daniel Mulligan and Isabel, his wife, left Scotland, and settled in Tullyconnaught in the neighbourhood of Banbridge. Their grandson, John Mulligan, was married to Miss Gamble, a niece of Dr. Gamble, who lived near Belfast. Their son, James Mulligan, was married to Miss Dougan, of Armagh. Their son, the Rev. John Mulligan, was married to Miss Katharine Mulligan, daughter of Daniel Mulligan, of Ballievy. The Rev. John Mulligan, who died on 12th October, 1836, was for 33 years minister of the Presbyterian Congregation of Moira. On the formation of the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, he was appointed Moderator, and on the formation of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, the Rev. John Mulligan as minister, and Captain Stannus as elder, of the Moira Congregation, signed the roll of the Remonstrant Synod. Shortly after the death of the Rev. John Mulligan, his eldest son, the Rev. James Mulligan (who was familiarly called the "Hebrew Scholar" on account of his knowledge of the Hebrew language and literature) was appointed minister of the Moira Congregation. He died on 26th September, 1869, after being minister of the Congregation for 32 years. The Rev. John Mulligan's third son, Francis Mulligan, was married to Miss Sara Simpson, daughter of Dr. Thomas Simpson, of Moira. Their son, John Francis Mulligan, was married to Miss Eliza M'Caw, daughter of William M'Caw, of Dromore. John Francis Mulligan was appointed Honorary Treasurer of the Second Congregation, Belfast, in 1886, and resigned in 1907, when he was presented with a solid silver salver, suitably inscribed, in recognition of his services as Treasurer. His son died at an early age without issue.

MATERNAL. Richard Brown Bamber, of Belmont, was married to a Miss White, of Whitehall, Co. Antrim. He was born in the year 1721, and died at Belmont on 1st November, 1797. His executors were his nephews, Thomas Bateson and Travers Hartley, and his son, Richard Bamber, and about six months after his death they disposed

of his estate in the dwelling-house and lands of Belmont, and his property generally. In the "Belfast News-Letter," under date 11th April, 1788, the following paragraph appeared:—"A number of respectable people have it likewise in contemplation to establish a READING SOCIETY in this town in order to purchase a library of scarce and valuable books by which the men of science and taste cannot fail of being highly gratified at a trifling expense." The outcome of this movement was the establishment of the "Belfast Library and Society for promoting Knowledge." When Richard Brown Bamber's books were sold there is reason to believe (according to "Belfastiensis") that some of them were purchased by the Reading Society and became the nucleus of the Linenhall Library. Richard Brown Bamber's son, Henry Bamber, was married to a Miss Fletcher. Henry Bamber was a member of the Belfast First Volunteer Company of 1778. He became a member of the First Presbyterian Congregation, Rosemary Street, in or about 1783, and was a subscriber to the building fund of the present Meeting-house of the First Congregation. On 29th August, 1784, his daughter, Elizabeth, was baptised by the Rev. Doctor James Crombie, minister of the Congregation. Henry Bamber's daughter, Ann Bamber, was married to Dr. Thomas Simpson, of Moira. They were members of the Rev. John Mulligan's Congregation. Dr. Thomas Simpson died of cholera on 29th December, 1832, aged 54 years. His tombstone, erected by his friends, stands in the graveyard attached to the Moira Remonstrant Presbyterian Congregation. Dr. Thomas Simpson's daughter, Sara Simpson, was married to Francis Mulligan, and became the mother of John Francis Mulligan.

A sister of Mr. J. F. Mulligan's great-great-grandmother (wife of Richard Brown Bamber), Miss Margaret White, of Whitehall, was married firstly to William Hartley, of Dublin, and secondly to Thomas Bateson, of Orangefield House. This Thomas Bateson and Margaret, his wife, were lineal ancestors of Lord Deramore.

The late Mrs. John Francis Mulligan's lineal (maternal) ancestor, the Rev. Alexander Colville, was minister of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Dromore from 1700 to 1719. He died in the pulpit when conducting Divine service. After his death his son, the Rev. Alexander Colville, A.M., M.D., was invited to become minister of the Congregation, and applied to the Presbytery of Armagh (to which the Congregation belonged) to ordain him as minister of Dromore. The Presbytery refused to do so on the ground of his refusal to renew his subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith. He subsequently applied to the Dublin Presbytery to admit him and the Congregation to membership, and on 27th October, 1725, he was installed by ministers of the Dublin and Munster Presbyteries as minister of the Dromore Congregation, which then became a Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Congregation. Dr. Colville died on 23rd April, 1777, after having been minister of Dromore for nearly 52 years. Some time after his death, the Congregation reverted to the Synod of Ulster, but on the formation of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster on 25th May, 1830, Mrs. Mulligan's great-grandfather, Robert Dickson (who was Seneschal of Dromore, Deputy Registrar of the Diocese, and Coroner for County Down, and was a grandson of Dr. Colville), signed the Roll of the Remonstrant Synod as elder, and the Rev. Samuel Craig Nelson, A.M., on the same day, signed as minister of the Dromore Congregation, which then again became a Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Congregation.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of Instruction for 1919, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

2nd November. Samson: the scourge of the Philistines. Read Judges xv. 9-17, xvi. 23-31. Key text, Judges xv. 16.

Introduction. Samson is the most extraordinary figure in the book of

Judges. He is like some old romantic hero, whose weakness and strength alike are on a magnificent scale. He can scarcely be termed a judge, for, unlike the other Judges, we have heard of, he did not lead the Israelites to any great victory as a united people. Indeed in his day Israel seems to have fallen into complete subjection to the Philistines, and to have been incapable of united action. Then Samson came along, a mighty hero, and by his individual feats of daring and strength struck the Philistines with confusion.

Points 1. *Samson's strength.* He belonged to a certain religious sect called the Nazarites, who pledged themselves to Jehovah's service, and for a sign never cut their hair or beards. According to the story, Samson's marvellous strength lay in his untrimmed hair. In the first part of our lesson (xv. 9-17) we have an illustration of his strength.

2. *Samson's downfall.* Despite the numerous injuries he inflicted on the Philistines, Samson was tainted with the same fault as beset many others of his people. He did not keep himself free from the seductions of the Philistines, and it was his foolish love for a cunning Philistine woman, Delilah, that led to his downfall. He told her his secret, and gave her the opportunity to cut his flowing hair. Bereft of that which, by his vows, had linked him to his God, he found himself weak in the hands of his enemies, and was overpowered, blinded, and made to work, like a mere beast, at grinding corn for the Philistines.

3. *Samson's magnificent end.* Elder scholars ought to have read to them parts of Milton's great poem, "Samson Agonistes." The significant point in this wonderful incident is the heroic complete self-sacrifice. We must remember that the Philistines' boastful celebrations of the feast of their God Dagon would seem to Samson like a blasphemy against Jehovah. To show the power of his God, he resolved that these blasphemers must be destroyed, even though that necessarily meant his own death. Time after time in history are we taught the same lesson—that the greatest deeds often involve the hero's death. Take the case of the Swiss Winkelried. His people were fighting for independence against a mighty Austrian host at Sempach in the year 1397. The only chance for the Swiss was to find a weak spot in the Austrian line, so that their troops, shaped like a wedge, might force a way in. But the Austrians held firm, until Winkelried hurled himself on their spears, and, receiving their points in his body, made a gap through which the Swiss poured to victory.

9th November. Review.

16th November. Samuel: the dedication. Read I. Samuel i. 20-28. Key text, I. Samuel i. 28.

Introduction. In the cases of Eli and Samuel we see the system of Judges in its full development. The Israelites had no king, because Jehovah was not only their God, but also their king. Religion and politics, sacred and secular, went hand in hand. Therefore the Judges, who were God's representatives, were high priest and prime minister rolled into one. The seat of government and centre of religious worship was Shiloh. (Jerusalem did not yet belong to the Israelites, and was at this time a fortress in the hands of the Jebusites). At Shiloh lived the priest and judge Eli, and at Shiloh, Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, prayed for a child, and promised that she would give him to God if her prayer was granted.

1. *The birth of Samuel.* Samuel's very name shows the deeply religious way in which children were regarded by the Jews. It means "granted to God" and "asked of God." (*a*) For *younger scholars*, enlarge on the Jews wonderful love for their children, *e.g.*, David and Absalom, Hagar and Ishmael, Joseph and Jacob. They loved them because they believed them to be gifts from God. It is for children to prove themselves such; they should try to live up to the love which Jesus expressed, when he said, "Suffer the little children, etc." (*b*) *For elder scholars.* The intensely divine rela-

tionship between parents and children appears in every crisis of Jewish life. In "Job" the crowning calamity is loss of his children; and crowning happiness is their restoration. Hence the Jews came to think of the relations between men and God as that between a father and his children. See Psalm ciii.: "Like as a father."

2. *The dedication.* Hannah gave her child to God's service just because she wanted him so much for herself. God had given to her the dearest gift she knew, and therefore she felt she could only show her gratitude by returning to God this her greatest treasure. Take also the case of Abraham and Isaac. Her heart, full of love both for God and her little son, rejoiced in having Samuel a priest of God. Note, however, dedication to God does not only mean being a priest or a minister. Every life should be dedicated. Thus the mother of the two great Roman brothers, the Gracchi, brought up her sons to feel that loyal service to their country was a divine dedication. Also John Milton, the poet, sought to serve God by striving to make his life worthy of the most ideal poetry. Dedication means living and working according to our very best. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well. *e.g.*, story of great man who was once a boot black. He was not ashamed of his humble work; all he cared was: "Did I clean the boots well?"

23rd November. Samuel: the son of Eli. Read I. Samuel ii. 11-18, 27-36. Key text, I. Samuel ii. 35.

Points. 1. *The priest's fee.* The priests were not paid in the ordinary way, but of the sacrifices brought so much was allotted to them. Eli's sons, however, took their share before the sacrifice whilst the meat was still raw and they could pick the best. What they did not eat themselves they could sell. To the Jews this would seem to be a very great crime, an abuse of trust. Here were there two young priests, acting in the absence of their old father, and responsible for the religious life of the community. They, above all, ought to have been honourable; but what they did was most dishonourable, for they took for their own gain what was meant for the service of God. There is no greater sin than the betrayal of a trust. When people have trusted us we are twice-bound to be honest, pure, and just. There is a beautiful, although sad, story about a little French girl named Francoise Marie, of Rochebeaucour. She lived in a forest, and one winter's day, when her parents had to go away on some business, she was entrusted with the care of her little brother. It so happened that a hungry wolf and her cubs burst into the cottage and attacked the children. Francoise Marie, though small, was strong, and might have succeeded in beating the creatures off; but, seeing her little brother stumble, she remembered her trust. Still fighting, she seized hold of him and thrust him safely into a cupboard; but so doing, put herself at the mercy of the wolves, who pulled her down and killed her. She died rather than betray her trust. How different were Eli's sons, who forgot everybody in their sole desire to benefit themselves!

2. *Eli's fault.* Eli was to blame, because he let his love for his sons blind him to the enormity of their faults, and consequently the whole people suffered. Contrast the behaviour of Lucius Junius Brutus. He was a Roman magistrate, and when his own sons were brought before him on a charge of treason condemned them. He loved them as a father, he said, but he condemned them as a judge.

3. *A faithful priest.* See key text. This refers to Samuel. In contrast to Eli and his sons, he never betrayed his trust, even giving up his own power later on, because he believed that was God's will. *For elder scholars.* Note verse 36. This refers to a later state of things, when a division was clearly marked in the priesthood between priests and Levites, the Levites, in many cases, being little better than menials, doing the work of cleaning up the sacred vessels and so on. As a punishment, the prophecy ran—the descendants of Eli would belong to this menial class.

30*th November. Samuel: the Call.* Read I. Samuel iii. Key text, I. Sam. iii. 10.

Introduction. This beautiful incident needs little exposition. So far as possible, the teacher should draw a vivid picture of the setting.

Points 1. *Samuel, the little child.* Like most children, Samuel would scarcely expect the Lord to call him; and yet it is as little children that we are very near to God. Did not Jesus say to the grown-ups "Except ye be as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of God"? Little children need to remember that God loves them with a peculiar affection, and that He is ever near to them, if they keep themselves good and pure. *For elder scholars,* take Wordsworth's lines:

"Not in entire forgetfulness,
Not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

It is for them never to lose their childlike trust in holy things.

2. *Samuel's need of Eli.* Until Eli told him Samuel did not know who had called him. This means that children need teachers to help them understand the nature of God's call. We must be taught. For instance, there is the story of "Eyes and No Eyes," which tells of two boys, both of whom lived and played among exactly the same things, and yet one of whom had never noticed anything. Most of us are like No Eyes to begin with. God is for ever calling to us, but we need help in order to understand.

3. *The Key Text.* So soon as Samuel knew that God was calling him he willingly listened. We all should do the same. We should be willing to check our wayward impulse, our selfishness, etc., for the sake of learning about God. How can we hear God speak? Perhaps not as Samuel did. But yet He is always speaking to us. When we see the beauty of the world, in our play, in our trials, in the help and comfort of our friends, and especially in our conscience, God is telling of His love for us and our duty to Him.

E. H. P.

SIX MONTHS IN A GERMAN PRISON CAMP.

GOING HOME.

At last came the eventful morning when we were to leave our camp for good. But not for the homeward journey yet. They told that owing to the difficulty of finding transport for us, and the fact that within three days the Allied forces would occupy our camp, we would have to be moved further inland. Just imagine it—we were to be moved nearer to Berlin! The French and American troops were only 10 miles away.

We had an armed escort to convey us to the station . . . not to see we did not escape (a sort of guard we had been accustomed to), but to see we were not harmed by the populace. Harmed! Why, bless you, the crowds that lined the streets, and the children that ran in and out of our ranks, were in no mood to molest us. Most of the "grown ups" smiled upon us, whether it was forced or not it was hard to tell. And the children ran after us, or held our hands and called out, excitedly, "Biscuits! Biscuits!" Most of those poor children looked as though they needed things more substantial and nourishing than biscuits (wholesome though the Genevan biscuits were), and the adults for the most part were most anæmic looking. The blockade, and I suppose the terribly anxious last months had told upon them. Still, save for the children, it was hard to feel much sympathy for them, for we had been callously and abominably treated, and we had all seen Belgium and France, had seen the women and children there; it was the "fortune of war."

There is little to tell of the journey to Freiburg . . . but we had an unexpected and interesting two hours in that large Cathedral town before entering our new camp.

We always understand the Germans to be real masters in organizing, but somehow a hitch occurred in their

present plans. We were first marched to a certain camp, and found we were not expected there, that it was simply a lager of horses and cattle! It was amusing to watch our escort and the officials there arguing and abusing each other. How easily the Germans lose their tempers if things go wrong. And things had evidently gone wrong here. Our escort too, was tired; they had not the joyful anticipations of "home at last," to which we were looking forward to buoy them up.

About turn! And we marched to . . . a hotel! It was a large and impressive looking place, better than any such place in Belfast, something like the Hotel Cecil . . . and five years before it had specially catered for English visitors. "Mais nous avons changé tout cela!" as our noble Ally would say. It now catered for . . . . well, frankly, we couldn't tell. The place was empty. There was the manager and three German waitresses . . . There was no sign of food anywhere. We had food with us. I, for example, had a lovely ginger cake, that had arrived for me, from Ballyclare! that very evening. We had tea with us too. Tea that they had not seen for four whole years. We gave them the tea to make for us. You should have seen the way they looked at our packets of tea, and carried them so carefully out of the room—they were so overcome they could not disguise their feelings. But you should have seen the tea they made us. I have never tasted such weak stuff before. I suppose it seemed to them so precious, so costly, that it would have been a sin to make it stronger. But it was tea, and they helped us to drink it. We left them about half a dozen quarter pound packets for the trouble they took over us. It was to them princely payment.

We arrived in our camp (Universitat in der Bertholdstrasse, a college) about 7 p.m. We received a right royal welcome from the hundreds of prisoners there. I heard someone shouting, "Any Royal Irish Rifles here!" At once I responded, and was taken to a room and welcomed by over a dozen officers from Belfast and district. We had a great supper and much to talk about. Those poor fellows, many of them, had been there two, three, and even four years. And I had thought of my "martyrdom" of just six months!

There were some cinematograph pictures, given by the Germans, about 8 o'clock that night. It was not worth describing save to say that the authorities must have had a poor opinion of the intelligence of the British officer. If you heeded the pictures at all the impression was that the "Comics" had been miscalled "Tragedies," and vice versa. It was really rather a depressing camp. Its courtyard was even smaller than ours. But they had been allowed out twice a week to a field near by, where they indulged in "football and other sports." They also had a good library of fiction and good study books, and "ran" a magazine.

Next day we were granted parole cards (Ehrenwort-Karte), and allowed perfect freedom outside. We had a good look at Freiburg, and even its environs. We rode in their tram cars (where we astonished the natives by giving up our seats to ladies—a chivalrous act apparently foreign here), went to a theatre! and a concert, bought some presents for Christmas (at a price), and generally behaved as though we were at home. Though I write this same simply and baldly, every minute was brimful of incident . . . and although I was keen on reaching home, yet, as the saying goes, "I wouldn't have missed it for worlds."

(To be concluded.)

Reports.

Unity Guild.—It was very gratifying to see the large number of members and friends at the opening meeting of the Winter Session, which was held in the Central Hall on Wednesday, the 8th

October. The Rev. Mathew Watkins, President of the Guild, received the members on their arrival. After tea, there were a number of progressive games, some of which were a source of great amusement to the onlookers, as well as to the players. There were two book prizes for those who had the highest number of games correct; after a tie, the first prize was awarded to Mrs. Yarr, and the second to Mrs. R. Wilkinson. The evening finished up with dancing, which was thoroughly enjoyed by the younger members of the party. Our best thanks are due to Miss Nan Purdy and Mr. Martin for the excellent music they so kindly favoured us with. The inaugural meeting of the Dramatic Section was held on Monday, the 20th October, when there was quite a good attendance, espcially of the junior members. The first meeting of the Study Circle was held on Wednesday, the 22nd October, but, owing to the unavoidable absence of Mr. Campbell Ferguson, M.A., B.L., Miss Dora Mellone kindly undertook to introduce the subject of the Public Health Act for Ireland. It is to be hoped that the members will take an active interest in this important branch of the Guild work.

* *

Ballycarry.—The Harvest Festival Services were held on the third Sunday of October, the preacher for both Morning and Evening Services being the Rev. A. Whitford, of Moneyrea. At both services Mr. Whitford preached eloquent sermons, which were very greatly appreciated by all who had the privilege of being present. At the Evening Service the church was filled to overflowing, many people failing to gain admission. Mr. Campbell, of Ailsa Craig, Whitehead, presided at the Carnegie organ, which, under his skilled control, rendered some very beautiful music. The choir were heard to great advantage in the anthem, "He shall feed His flock," Miss Evelyn Hamilton being the soloist. The musical portion of the services was particularly in evidence, Mr. Campbell having taken special pains in the training of the choir for the occasion. The church was richly decorated with the many coloured trophies of the harvest season by the Misses Hamilton, Service, Millar, Connor, and other ladies of the Congregation.

* *

Ballyclare. — Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held here on Sunday, 12th October, and a Children's Service of Thanksgiving and Praise the next evening. The services on Sunday were conducted by our Clerk of the Synod, the Rev. G. J. Slipper. There were good congregations, especially on Sunday night, and Mr. Slipper's thoughtful and impressive discourses were very much appreciated. Miss Lily M. Kennedy rendered the solo, "O Divine Redeemer," with liquid clearness and naturalness, and with much sympathy. Our minister preached at the Children's Service with much acceptance; the children (of all ages) listened to the discourse with very good attention. Mrs. Moore, our talented organist, played at all the services with her usual skill and with appropriate music, and sang with her usual strength and feeling "Nearer, my God, to Thee." Both herself and her choir (augmented recently by male voices from the Congregation) added to the impressiveness of all the services by their splendid performances. Particularly well did the children from the Sunday School sing at their service. Three of the younger ones sang together (assisted by two of the seniors) "I asked the little joyous bird, who taught him how to sing." It was remarked by more than one that our Church was even more tastefully decorated than before. We thank all our friends who contributed, and for the willing helpers who worked so hard at arranging the manifold gifts of pot plants, corn, fruit, vegetables, and flowers.

* *

Banbridge.—The Annual Services of Thanksgiving for the blessings of harvest were held in the Unitarian Church, Banbridge, on Sunday, 5th October, when the special preacher was the Rev. W. H. Townley Tilson, M.A., Greyabbey. As in previous years, the interior of the church was beautifully

decorated with flowers, fruit, and various products of the field. The centre of a very pretty scheme was the pulpit, where an abundance of flowers and plants were placed with exquisite taste, whilst worked in white on a background of moss were the words: "Forget not all His benefits." Seasonable mottoes were hung around the gallery, which was also draped with a pretty fringe of corn, over which was placed bunches of flowers, whilst the pillars were enveloped with corn, scarlet berries, and autumn leaves. Flowers were also in plenty about the windows, and, altogether, the entire scheme was a fine tribute to the artistic taste of those responsible for this part of the work; indeed they excelled the efforts of previous years in this respect. The music for the occasion, which was in charge of the organist, Miss Dornan, was of a high order, and the rendition of the anthem, "Seek ye the Lord" and "Fear not, Oh Land" are particularly worthy of special commendation, the solo part being taken in splendid style by Miss Helen Stevenson and Mr. J. Mooney.

* *

Cairncastle.—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held in the Old Meeting-house on Sunday, October 5th, at 4 o'clock, and on Monday, October 6th, at 7-30 o'clock, when very large congregations were present. The minister officiated at the Sunday Service, taking for his text Matthew xiii. 30, "Let both grow together until the harvest." On Monday evening the Very Rev. Alfred Turner, Moderator of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, occupied the pulpit, and took for his text the familiar words, "Give us this day our daily bread." An orthodox visitor was heard to remark afterwards —"That is the best harvest sermon I ever heard." Special music was sung by an augmented choir, the anthem being Edwin Clare's "He gives us fruitful seasons," and the harvest carol, Caleb Simpers' "Wheat and barley." Miss Mary Annie M'Clure sang the solo part very sweetly. On Monday, as well as the anthem and carol, the special Harvest Service, published by the Sunday School Association, Essex Hall, compiled and arranged by Rev. W. C. Bowie and Mr. J. W. Tosh, was used, the children of the Sunday School singing the children's anthem in the service. Mrs. James Tweed, Ballymullock, played the organ on Sunday, and Miss Cambridge, Broadford, on Monday. The church was most beautifully decorated with quantities of corn, flowers, fruit, vegetables, plants, and festoons of white ivy and red Virginian creeper. The weather was perfect all through, and everyone entered heartily into the services and enjoyed them thoroughly.

On Sunday, September 21st, the Rev. Percival Godding, of Ballylcare, exchanged pulpits with the minister.

* *

Clough.—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on October 10th and 12th. Friday evening service was conducted by the Rev. D. J. Williams, Killinchy, who, with Mrs. Williams, motored over for the occasion. His sermon was appropriate and impressive, and his service was greatly praised and appreciated. The services were continued on the following Sunday morning and evening, which were conducted by Rev. J. D. Davies. The church was beautifully decorated by the ladies of the Congregation with a display of fruit, vegetables, and flowers contributed by members. As usual, Mr. Allen, Mountpanther, sent a generous supply and variety of lovely flowers, etc., and exquisite plants, etc., came from Nutgrove. The attendance at each service was very good. In addition to special hymns, solos were ably rendered by Mrs. J. M'Cammon, Miss L. Irvine, and Mr. Bob Hogg. Miss Irvine presided at the organ.

* *

Downpatrick.— Downpatrick Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church held a Harvest Thanksgiving on 28th Sept. Adorned with the fruits of field and garden, the hallowed old place, which has changed little with the passing years, wore an aspect of strange beauty.

The deep, old-fashioned pews, the high confined pulpit, overhanging the choir, the corn sheaves and greenery, the bloom—surely one had seen all this in some half-forgotten wood engraving years and years ago. Congregationally, this was a big occasion, and one of the ablest of the younger ministers of the denomination, Rev. E. Savell Hicks, M.A., of Dublin, had been engaged to preach. Perhaps that greatly misused word, "interesting," best describes the sermon; it was marked by a certain directness and emphasis of expression, and was not over-allusive. The names of Pope, Carlyle, Huxley, and Carnegie occurred. Carnegie's beneficence was appreciated, while he was contrasted with Him who was without worldly wealth, who indeed had no place to lay His head, and whose executors were a few enthusiasts, penniless as Himself. Beginning with the witness of our recognition of God's covenant with man and its fulfilment, the preacher pointed out how the whole processes of nature went on according to plan, and he reasoned that we ought to plan our lives wisely, so that our work might be worth doing for ourselves and other people. Groping and stumbling, even failure itself, were better than blind, sodden unprogressiveness. One striking quotation was that if men would devote to the affairs of the mind and the soul a tithe of the time they devoted to their hobbies their lives might be much more successful. At the Evening Service there was again a large congregation, and Madame Bella Ewen rendered a solo very sympathetically. Miss Maud Crickard presided at the harmonium with her usual kindness and ability.

* *

Dromore. — Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held in this church on a recent Sabbath, and were extremely well attended, the attendance at the Sunday Evening Service creating quite a record. The interior of the sacred edifice had undergone a complete transformation at the hands of those who were responsible for the decoration, and presented a very harvest-like appearance in its fresh array of evergreens, flowers, fruit, etc. Indeed the display of decorative art was never seen to better advantage than on the present occasion. The preacher at both the services was the Rev. J. Barron, of Ballyhemlin, who delivered addresses in keeping with the occasion. His text at the Morning Service was taken from the 26th chapter of Deut., 2nd verse—"That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there." In the evening the text was found in John, chapter 4, verse 35—"Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look unto the fields; for they are white already to harvest." The choir, which had been trained by Mrs. Ruddock, led the praise portion of the services in an excellent manner. The anthem, "Blessed shall be thy basket and store," was faultlessly rendered, the solo part being taken by Mr. David Ervine, Belfast, who also sang as a solo "Light of the world" with his usual high class ability. Mrs. Ruddock presided at the organ with customary efficiency.

* *

Holywood.—The Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday, October 26th, and the following Monday. The church was very prettily decorated, there being a plentiful supply of flowers, fruit, vegetables, and corn. All the services were well attended, those on the Sunday being conducted by Rev. G. L. Phelps. At these services the choir sang very effectively the following anthems, "Praise the Lord, O my Soul" (Smart), "Seek ye the Lord" (Roberts), "Bless the Lord" (Martin). At the Monday Evening Service Maxfield's harvest cantata, "The Bountiful Giver," and the anthem, "Sun of my Soul," were rendered by an augmented choir, the

service being conducted by Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A, B.D., who gave an impressive address. The fruit and vegetables were afterwards sent to the Holywood Nursing Society.

* *

Killinchy. — Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday and Monday, September 28th and 29th. The festival took place this year under favourable circumstances; the weather was all that could be desired. Contributions of grain, flowers, fruit, foliage, and other things useful were sent to an adequate extent, and as fine a display was to be seen as in former years. The decorators indeed did their part beautifully, and did not spare pains, and therefore it was well done. We take this opportunity of thanking them each and all for their labours, which were not light. The decorations were appreciated very heartily by all who saw them. The service in the morning—much the largest morning attendance we have ever had on these occasions—was conducted by the minister, who preached an appropriate sermon. The evening preacher was the Rev. J. G. Davies, Comber, to whom a very large congregation listened with obvious interest. Mr. Davies also officiated on Monday night, when the same attention and interest were very manifest. We thank Mr. Davies for his services and the high-toned character of his discourses, which were well calculated to bring home the lessons of the harvest. Special hymns were sung, and the choir rendered the anthem, "Lord of all power and might."

* *

Larne and Kilwaughter.—Participation in the rebound after the long agony of the war, a Guild has been established in this Congregation mainly of a social character, and from which not even the classic cult of Terpsichore is excluded. The inaugural meeting was held in the schoolroom on Friday evening, 10th October, and was very well attended. In his short address commencing the proceedings, the Minister was careful, in speaking from a psychological point of view, to emphasise the fact that innocent pleasures moderately indulged were not only gratifying at the moment, but also exercised an influence for good on the moral and spiritual character generally. After the inevitable tea—always so refreshing to the inner man—songs, selections on the piano, and recitations were given, the happy meeting concluding with a little indulgence in the cult mentioned, the only drawback connected therewith being its shortness. The Guild meets monthly.

* *

Moneyrea.—Services of Thanksgiving for the harvest were held at Moneyrea on Sunday, September 21st. As usual, the church had been tastefully decorated with flowers, fruits, and vegetables, which were given to the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast. The Rev. J. G. Davies, the newly appointed minister at Conber, officiated at both services, Mr. Davies' sermons being greatly appreciated by large congregations. Our collections were in advance of previous years.

* *

Templepatrick.—Harvest Thanksgiving Service was held here on Sunday evening, 19th October. The minister, Rev. A. Turner, preached the Gospel, basing his discourse on Philippians ii. 21, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Miss Fannie Lees sang "A Harvest Song" and "Come unto Him." Miss Getty presided at the organ. The Meeting-house was suitably decorated for the occasion, and the congregation was large to overflowing.

According to a writer on the religious outlook, in the *Daily News*, "evidences are multiplying that the Churches realise the necessity for fresh enthusiasms and newer methods in their enterprise. Conventionality has stamped itself upon many local Churches, and their life appears to be declining

slowly but surely. Where a High Church or an Evangelical clergyman is preaching to large congregations, his appeal is usually not confined to ritual or the lack of it. His character, his work, and his general attitude to the parish are generally the determining factors. This point applies in varying particulars equally to the Free Church minister."

* *

A crucial question is how to revive Christian ideals and worship in the dead and alive Churches. The English mind requires a worshipful service. It cannot content itself with mere sensationalism. Organisation is secondary. The financial question is subsidiary, for if the people are reached money is forthcoming. One of the failures of the Churches is the lack of studied and steady application to their teaching methods. Our experiences of the war have illustrated the fact that while there was exhibited on the part of soldiers a general belief in Christian principles, and some appreciation of the Christian message, a surprising amount of superstitition and ignorance was linked with this elementary knowledge. Mere popular preaching is a great delusion. Multiplication of machinery becomes a vexatious snare. Both, unfortunately, are in demand, but the teaching ministry of the Churches needs to be resuscitated and developed if the nation is to be re-taught the outstanding principles anp essons of the Christian religion.

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